1:Beals E-5 (1940-1941)1946 NU34 Tarasco NU34
[p1118a]

454 accumulated a substantial contribution without
358 feeling the drain on their finances. In this way the priest accumulated enough money to rebuild the altar and the choir loft as well as make other improvements.

454 This procedure would have amounted to little more than a clever money-making scheme had not the priest projected it much more deeply into Cherán life. At the same time he gave the pig banks to the adults, he gave smaller banks to all the children. The children he instructed, not to save money for the church, as one might expect, but to accumulate their centavos so that when a fiesta came along they would have money to buy what they wanted and have a good time. The result of this procedure was that today the majority of Cherán residents, both adults and children, each has his bank, in which he accumulates small change, and the habit of saving, usually for some specific end, has become quite common in the town. A
[323] regular part of the pottery stocks brought to
[532] Cherán at fiestas are pottery banks, now made not only in the shape of pigs but in the shape of many other animals, with a frequent touch of the fantasy and caricature which characterize Tarascan modeled pottery.[11]

THE PRIEST AND THE CHURCH ORGANIZATION

793 The priest, of course, is appointed by the Bishop in Zamora. At the time the study began, the resident priest had been some years in Cherán and evidently was popular and well-liked. Shortly afterward he was transferred to another parish, and considerable efforts were made to persuade the Bishop to change his mind about the appointment. A petition was also circulated and taken to the Bishop. Considerable feeling was generated by the Bishop's adamant stand on the matter, and for several weeks no request was made for a new priest in hopes of getting a return of the former priest. When the old priest returned for a visit and to settle some business affairs, the entrance to the residence was ornamented with flowers and pine

[177] [11] The pig bank, as is well known, was introduced to Mexico by the wife of the late Ambassador Morrow. Those interested in making anthropology a predictive science might well be somewhat concerned by the devious, even fantastic, route by which the pig bank and the savings idea were transmitted to Cherán and became a part of Cherán culture.

793 branches, and large numbers came to visit him. Despite these efforts, a new priest arrived some 2 weeks after the departure of the old priest.

The household and assistants of the priest vary somewhat. The mother of the old priest served as his housekeeper, and there were several servants. The old priest relied primarily on the *cabildo* or ačes for his aides in church. The new priest brought a household whose exact composition I did not learn. In addition, he brought a sacristan and one or two other assistants, who took over several of the functions of the *cabildo*. In general, the new priest adopted a much more aggressive attitude. Not only did he immediately get into a bitter quarrel with the *cabildo* (to be described later), but he interfered with customs on every hand, wore his priestly dress in public and permitted people to kneel in public and kiss his hand, and mixed in political matters. Considerable numbers of Cherán residents resented his attitude bitterly, including many of the devout members of the community.

793 578

793 The support of the priest is based on voluntary contributions, but in Cherán the priest is aggressive. Formerly, the *cabildo* kept the priest informed as to the amounts of harvest, and the priest, often personally, at other times through one of his assistants, directly asked for "alms." The amount suggested is the traditional tenth; in some cases people give him this amount, but many give less. The payments are mostly in kind, usually wheat or corn, which is brought to the priest's residence and placed by him in a storehouse in charge of the *kéri*. It was reported that the priest normally sells corn and wheat to needy local residents at about 1 peso a bushel below the market price. The facts in the case at the time of inquiry were somewhat obscured by the quarrel with the *cabildo*.

The functions of the priest in Cherán are numerous. Not only does he say the obligatory Masses, but he also celebrates special Masses in connection with every fiesta and *mayordomía*. All weddings are also celebrated with special Masses. He also arranges for such special events as visits of the Bishop for confirmation.

The Bishop paid one visit to Cherán during the time of the study. The priest appointed four *comisionados* in each *barrio* to gather con-

793 tributions. For some time before this visit, rockets were fired off at noon and at 3 p. m. and the church bells were rung about 3:45 p. m. [783] This was to call people to confess in anticipation of the Bishop's visit.

575 794 Another activity, about which little is known, is in connection with the various societies. As indicated previously, there seems to be a degree of secrecy about the functions of these groups; undoubtedly they are primarily religious. For example, on January 3, the day of the Sacred Heart, members of the Society of the Sacred Heart spent the day in church. They wore red bands about their necks with ornaments of red ribbons and spent much of their time kneeling and in group prayers led by a maestro or lay reader. There is also reason to believe that the new priest, at least, used these groups for political purposes. Scarcely a day passed without one group or the other being summoned to a meeting at church by means of special signals on the church bells.

The majority of the people in town belong to one society or another. Rarely or never do they belong to two. The societies of Saint Joseph and of Mary are for boys and girls, respectively; when they marry they are dropped from membership. Adults belong to the other societies. Membership is by invitation only. Each society has a board of directors (*mesa directiva*) which issues the invitations. All meetings are held in the church or in the priest's quarters.

794 578 798 There can be little doubt that Cherán is a strongly Catholic community. During the height of the conflict between the Church and the Government, when priests were forbidden to officiate and the churches were closed,[84] Cherán residents underwent considerable risk to bring a priest to the town periodically. Many of the services were held in a private house belonging to a certain Cherán resident who was later in bitter conflict with the new priest who arrived in 1940. The minority in the town 794 578 who were opposed to Church domination in political affairs did not dare to speak openly. Quotation of a statement given me by one of

[84] It will be recalled that this restriction was imposed when the Church refused to permit priests to obey the new laws requiring them to register. The real point of the conflict, of course, was in those aspects of the laws which prohibited Church schools and stripped the Church of all economic rights.

794 578 these men illustrates the situation clearly, particularly as it came to a head in 1940. That the informant had no violent anti-Church sentiments is indicated by the fact that he previously deprecated the rumors that a school was to be established, pointing out that it would merely be a sort of religious seminary primarily for the girls, who were not being sent to school in Cherán anyway. His statement was as follows:

793 578 794 The priest (referring to the new priest in 1940) is entering into political matters and speaks from the pulpit about them. In the meetings which he calls, he speaks much more directly. In one which I attended, he said he was sent to put himself in front of the people to guide them on the road they should follow. No one, he said, could molest him nor interfere with him. Even though there were some misguided persons in the town who spoke against him, he would not permit them to prevent his arriving at his ends, and if it proved necessary, he himself knew how to manage pistol and rifle and knew how to fight in the forefront of his people for their rights.

This speech was received with great enthusiasm and applause and I had to remain silent. That is one of the unfortunate things here that no one can say anything against the priest or practically the whole town turns against him. As the people have always the idea that the priest is a sacred person and that a town without a priest is not a town with a complete life, the priest has only to say that a certain person is against him and the whole town will attack the person.

I believe that this priest is very disruptive (muy divisionista) for the town. He wears his clerical garb in the town very proudly, receiving homage in the streets, a thing that the priests have not done before. The priest who left here was somewhat that way when he arrived, but when, as a friend, I indicated to him that he had spoken of political matters from the pulpit, he said it was a slip which he would not repeat. With the old priest one could speak reasonably about anything and discuss the affairs of the town and the attitude he should take, but with this one it is impossible to say anything. He will not permit the slightest criticism.

578 177 793 Some of the minority faction in the town who are inclined to be anticlerical are undoubtedly affected by their experiences in the United States. A former mayor was very outspoken in his objections to the behavior of the local priests. Many of the priests, he said, are guilty of much opposition to the Government and especially to the schools. He asserted that the priests seem not to wish people to read and write and are responsible for many fathers not sending their children to school. For this reason there is much unnecessary ignorance in

578 the town. Continuing his remarks, the former
177 mayor also said that the priests seem not to
793 want people to understand the prayers and rituals. He then went on to point out how different conditions are in the United States, where he had spent some years, and entered into a discussion of the reasons for the differences.

RELIGIOUS FIESTAS

527 The most important rituals and recreational events at Cherán are the fiestas. They are not, however, intimately connected today with the Church. It might be fair to say that the saints' days are the excuses for holding the major fiestas. All the large fiestas are accompanied by special Masses, but the extent of church connection is perhaps less than that involved in the mayordomías. Essentially, the fiestas are secular events with religious overtones. All the major fiestas are conducted by the municipal authorities, rather than by the church. They are important commercial events in the town, especially the fiesta of the patron saint. They also provide a great deal of entertainment. In general, they offer occasions for making the major purchases of the year, showing hospitality, overdrinking, and for the excitement of large crowds and release from routine. Only a few people find the religious aspects of importance, even though they may attend the Mass.

In some towns the fiestas are in disrepute and have been abolished. In Cherán there is no opposition to the fiestas on religious grounds, but primarily on grounds of drunkenness. As one solid farmer remarked—

[185] The bad part of the fiestas is that people get so very drunk; you have seen how the women become more disorderly than any (I had not observed this as a general thing, by any means). The worst is where the fiesta is too large, as in Cheranástico, where three bands are employed although the town is small. People there have to pay 13 to 15 pesos per family. Also bad is when cargueros have to pay the entire cost of the fiestas. Here the fiesta costs only 1 or 2 pesos per person (family).

Such views are unusual in Cherán and, except for efforts to introduce such novelties as basketball games, the progressive administration takes pride in perpetuating the conduct of the fiestas on a grand scale.

527 or two. The big bell also began to ring about midnight and was rung intermittently all the
796 rest of the night. Early in the morning there was a Low Mass and at 9 a. m. a High Mass.
[793] These were performed by the priest as part of his duties and were not the special Masses paid for by the town. About noon a few members of the Cherán band gathered in front of the priest's house and played for a time, continuing intermittently the rest of the afternoon.

527 Much activity was under way in the plaza, although the main market day would not be
[443] until Sunday. Vendors of shoes, clothing, cakes, candles, candy, apples, peanuts, chiles, dried fish, and painted wooden bowls in Quiroga style were added to those already present. A
[265] gambling game was set up. The booths for
[275] the liquor and food shops were mostly set up on this day. Comments implied that the girls
[548] running the booths were all prostitutes, but all the booths were completely open. In any case, the booths are the center for most of the drunkards and most of the fights and disorder associated with the fiesta. The *castillo* was nearly complete (pl. 6, upper left). On this day also, the church was cleaned up and decorated. A few began working at the bull ring, digging up old posts and clearing away weeds, while others transported new posts and logs from the various *barrios*.

[443] All day Saturday vendors arrived. Most of them merely located their space and unpacked their animals, but did not unpack their goods (pl. 5, upper left). A great many people arrived, and the plaza and nearby streets were crowded. A large carousel or merry-go-round
[529] was set up in a patio behind the *municipio*, while a smaller one was placed on one of the side streets.

527 In the evening, shortly before dusk, the com-
533 missioners and their assistants went to the calvary, the chapel at the east edge of town, to meet the bands coming from Nahuatzen and Pichataro. The bands had not arrived by dark, when one of the most violent thunderstorms anyone could remember deluged the party. It was said there were no ceremonies of greeting ordinarily and that the commissioners merely greeted their band and led it to one of the houses for supper. Certainly, there were no ceremonies that night.

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796 saint's image. At each stop the priest prayed and there was an alms collection. A band played intermittently nearby, and while the procession moved it was accompanied by two *chirimías* and a drum. The dancers formed part of the procession, wearing heavy elaborate crowns.

On August 10, part of the fiesta was observed at San Lorenzo. There were four moros, the last one to enter the large atrium of the church being preceded by two *chirimía* players and a drum. After entering the atrium, the band played, and the horse of one moro, a beautiful animal, danced to the music. Groups of men carried *cuelgas* to the church. These were long ropes wrapped about with plants and hung with fruits and bread. Accompanying the *cuelgas* were women with cornstalks and elaborate paper decorations. At the church a minor crisis developed when one of the two priests, a young man, tried to prevent some of the men from entering because they were obviously very [793] drunk. "God does not wish it, the Saint does not wish it, and I do not wish it," he exclaimed, quite unconscious apparently of the implications of the order of his statement. The groups barred from the church waited patiently outside until the Mass began and then went quietly in.

After Mass, the images of the patron saint, San Lorenzo, the Virgin, and Christ were brought from the church, decorated elaborately with the *cuelgas* and the cornstalks and paper ornaments. The moro dancers dismounted and paid their respects to the saints one at a time. Then they danced in pairs before the images, mostly walking back and forth in complex figures between the images and the big stone cross and clashing their spurs. Women threw handfuls of small candies over the dancers as they passed, and they shortly were wading thigh deep in small children scrambling for the candies.

The fiesta at Ahuíran, in September, was visited by many Cherán residents. Quantities [272] of *atole de caña*, atole made with the juice from the stalks of green corn, is served. The 438 principal item in the market is pottery, and it 323 is believed in Cherán that pottery purchased in the market at Ahuíran does not break easily. It should be noted that Ahuíran does not make

1:Beals E-5 (1940-1941)1946 NU34 Tarasco NU34
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796 794 [535] kéŋi, who serves them *posole*. Afterward they return home. On this occasion, also, the *colector* is supposed to sponsor a dance called *los viejitos* in which five boys and five girls take part (some say six of each sex). The girls are said to be the future *uanánčes*.

Although the new *prioste* takes office on December 8, the duties of the *prioste* do not end until the *mayordomía* of the Holy Child, the Santo Niño. On this occasion he is obligated to accompany the *uanánčes* while they dance.[36]

The *uanánčes* mentioned above are a group of young girls selected by the *prioste*. (This is contradicted in a sense by the fact that some parents make a vow for their girls to serve as *uanánčes*, for example, if the girl is sick when small.) They act as servants of the *prioste*, going every day to the church (usually accompanied by their mothers). At church they sweep, bring flowers for the altars, and help keep things in order. At Christmas time they perform a sort of *pastorela* dance, aided by other girls. One of the girls is known as the šuŋánda and is regarded as the first or leader. She is in charge of the incense, the "one who carries copal." The other girls have no special names.

578 794 ●793 Frequent references have been made to the quarrel between the *cabildo* and the new priest. The motivations and the exact events probably were not discovered. In any case, the roots of the quarrel go far back in time. Ostensibly, however, the fight started with the departure of the old priest.

So far as could be ascertained, the first overt act in the struggle was the calling of a *junta* on the matter. While the *junta* was called by the mayor, in this he was merely conforming to the custom of calling such a meeting whenever it was requested. The request was made by one David Guerrero, a somewhat surly and unapproachable person (so far as the staff of the study were concerned) who ran a small store and saloon (mostly the latter) not far from the plaza. Guerrero's motivations seem obscure. He was not particularly active in the church. Neither did he seem to belong to any

[36] It should be noted that the above account is based on data from informants. Owing to the quarrel between the priest and the *cabildo* none of the ceremonies were performed in 1940. The data are from musicians who always attended and from members of the *cabildo*.

578 other group, although he was one of the few
793 active supporters of Almazán in the previous
presidential election. In the opinion of the best
794 informants there had existed no movement against the *cabildo* until Guerrero undertook his campaign, although obviously the roots of the charges and bad feeling were already present.

At the *junta* between 75 and 100 persons were present. Guerrero spoke, charging the *cabildo* with demanding gifts from the *cargueros*, stealing from the church, driving out the previous priest, and being very drunken. The last charge was what many believed to have convinced the new priest so that he turned against the *cabildo*. An arrangement was reached in which the assignment of *mayordomías* would be taken from the *cabildo* and persons wishing to "take a saint" would ask it of the priest.

At the first *junta* everyone agreed with the charges. A second *junta* was called. In the meantime the *prioste*, one Magdaleno Guerrero (no relation to David) went to the Bishop in Zamora and secured a letter (which I saw) categorically stating that neither he nor anyone else had attempted to have the former priest removed. This letter was presented at the second *junta* by the *representante del pueblo*, who defended the *cabildo*. (The *cabildo* did not attend. Magdaleno Guerrero said for a while they were afraid they might be killed.) This made the people less bitter, but they still agreed to abolish the *cabildo*.

With regard to the other charges, the *prioste* asserted that all the work of the *cabildo* was voluntary, while his own expenses as *prioste* amounted to between $100 and $200 for the year. Among his duties was to pay for Masses on December 8 and December 25. Following the latter Mass, the *cabildo* met at the house of the *prioste* who served food. To this assembly came people who wished to ask for a saint. They brought presents of cigarettes, while the wives brought bread. These presents, the *prioste* asserted, were voluntary and were not demanded. The names of the persons were put down on lists in the order applications were received and each *mayordomía* was awarded to the person whose name headed the list.

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578 794 793 With regard to the charge of drunkeness, the *prioste* asserted that this had been true "in the time of our grandfathers" but it was not true today. What gave color to the charge, he said, was that people brought them many bottles of *charanda*. These the *cabildo* sold in the stores and returned the empty bottles to the donors.

It was quite evident that the *prioste* was filled with bitterness over the situation. The dance of the *pastorela*, he felt, was especially the dance of the *cabildo* and the *prioste* and one which gave much pleasure to the people, and now they would lose it. (Even our most anti-Church informants agreed that the dance was the best given in Cheran, partly because it was unaccompanied by the drunkenness and rowdiness associated with other dances.) The *prioste* also said that the *cabildo* was accepting the will of the people and was neither speaking nor making propaganda with anyone. After all, he pointed out, the *cabildo* gained, and especially the *prioste* and *colector* gained because they now did not have to spend their money. However, he had gone to the church and taken out the large candles and some small ones left by his wife. This, he said, was custom, for the old *prioste* always took the remains of the candles and the new *prioste* provided others. The priest had asked why he removed the candles and the *prioste* had explained the situation. The priest then asked if he was not disposed to leave the candles, but he refused. After this the *prioste* scarcely left the house, and never went either to the plaza or the church, partly because of fear, partly because in church he would have to see those who had thrown him out of office and this "caused him anger which it is better not to have before the Lord."

The *prioste* suggested that the leader of the opposition was an ambitious man who was furthering some devious and as yet undisclosed project to further his own interests. He also said the *cabildo* had made no move to seek a new *prioste* or kẽ,i, which they ordinarily did by August. He also said he had no idea whether the priest would appoint new officials to take the place of the *cabildo* or go on naming people to perform their duties from day to day as he was doing. Incidentally, he pointed out

1:Beals E-5 (1940-1941)1946 NU34 Tarasco NU34
[p. 135b]

578 that never before had the church been closed
793 when the priest left town.
794 In addition to the above accounts, which seem reasonably correct as far as they go, there were floods of rumors and stories. At one time I was told authoritatively by several people that my landlord had been named the new chief of the *cabildo*. When I asked him about it, he was completely surprised and it finally appeared that no new *cabildo* was to be named.

With regard to the story told by the *prioste* of taking his candles from the church, a much more lurid version was circulated. One woman's account of the quarrel was as follows:

> When the new priest came he asked one of the *cabildo* to bring him maize from the storehouse. The *cabildo* had taken all the maize from the storehouse but the man pretended not to know this. He went to the storehouse and returned, saying, "Father, there is no maize." "What has happened to it? There is supposed to be maize." The priest gave the man money to buy maize for that day. Next day the priest made inquiries. People told him the *cabildo* had stolen the maize. He called the *cabildo* together and accused them. They denied the theft. The priest said, "Do you want me to bring witnesses?" They conferred and said, "No. We took the maize." The father began to scold them, and they said, "What right have you to scold us? We collected the maize and we have a right to live." The priest became angry and told them they could no longer serve in the church. They went away. For 2 or 3 days they did nothing. Then they came in a body and began stripping the church of all the altar cloths, vases, and decorations. The priest interrupted them. They said, "These things are ours; we bought them. If we cannot serve here, we will take these away." They argued. The priest said, "These things belong to the community." But he realized it was not becoming for him to argue in this way and kept still. When they finished, he said, "Now have you everything belonging to you?" They thought and said, "Everything but the saints." At this the priest flew into a rage and said, "The saints belong to the community. Now take the other things and leave the church and do not let me ever see your faces again."

This is a very interesting tale, but it contains very little truth. The major fact which seems correct as compared with the *prioste's* tale is that the *cabildo* did actually remove all the vases, altar cloths, and other things they had bought.

One man, regarded as a fairly reliable source of information, stated that the *cabildo* had received the alms given at church but had

578 794 793 formerly given them all to the priest. In recent years, he stated, the *cabildo* members began taking half for themselves. When the new priest came, people decided they no longer wished the *cabildo* and spoke to the priest. He abolished the *cabildo* and barred the members from the church so that alms would now be given directly to the priest.

Still another man, one who probably gave the best-informed statement, which gained weight because he was both an anti-Church and anti-*cabildo* man on general principles, pointed out some of the history of the affair. According to this informant, when the priests were forbidden to function in the church, the *cabildo* was responsible for bringing priests to town secretly and helping them to hold services in private houses. This involved very considerable expenses. (There seems little reason to doubt these statements, which were verified in other connections.) In the meantime, inasmuch as people believed it necessary to take seeds, i.e., maize and wheat, to the church, they continued their gifts, which were received and stored by the *cabildo*. This informant believed, however, that the quantities were probably less than usual inasmuch as there was no one to urge them. Out of this fact probably rose the real basis of the quarrel. When it began to appear that there was small likelihood of a resident priest returning, the *cabildo* began selling the accumulated grain, utilizing the profits to defray the considerable expenses of smuggling priests into the town. For the people it was difficult to tell whether the expenses claimed were correct or not. When a priest finally was reestablished in Cherán, the *cabildo* presented him with an account of their transactions. Many believed that this account was incorrect and that the *cabildo* had been guilty of defalcation. It was then that the idea began that the *cabildo* should be done away with. However, it is unlikely the *cabildo* received any profits after the return of the priests. The priest made an investigation of the affair and as a result the *cabildo* tried to force him to leave the town. (This last accusation seems adequately disposed of by the letter from the Bishop mentioned above.) When the new priest arrived in 1940, he announced his inten-

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578 tion of reopening the investigation and stated
793 that, as the *cabildo* would probably try to get
794 rid of him, too, he had better get rid of the *cabildo* right away.

An aspect of the situation which had not been resolved at the termination of the study was the effect of the change upon the *mayordomías* formerly in the charge of the *cabildo*. It was the belief of many, including the priest, that applicants for a *mayordomía* would simply apply to him. The priest was quoted as saying that he had no intention of interfering with the local customs. None of the *cargueros* consulted seemed ever to have thought of the possibility of the change effecting the operation of the system. The *cabildo* nevertheless has a proprietary interest in the saints and there were some indications that the *cabildo* was willing to suppress some of the customs. The *uandnčes* did not perform the *pastorela* in 1940. The *prioste* refused to put up anything for the dance, or even participate when a cousin offered to pay all the expenses. The parents of all but one of the *uandnčes* also apparently welcomed the excuse for avoiding the expenses involved. The *cabildo* also attempted to forbid the *carguero* of the Holy Child to sponsor the performance of the *negrito* dance (described below) although this was a traditional duty of the *carguero*. As he was one of those who attacked the *cabildo* and claimed to have been forced to make heavy contributions in order to get the *mayordomía*, he sought the permission of the priest and held the dance despite the *cabildo's* objections.

The progressive element in the town was of the opinion that the demotion of the *cabildo* would mean the early disappearance of the *mayordomías*. However, this overlooked the several *mayordomías* which functioned outside the *cabildo* system, and it is doubtful if the disappearance of the *mayordomías* will be particularly accelerated by this change. There is some possibility of this, of course, and one of the curious features of the situation is that a priest who apparently is conservative and who does not wish to interfere with the local customs should have been responsible for this attack upon them and for alienating the most conservative Church group from his support.

2:Carrasco E-4, 5 (1945)1952
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621 officers mentioned above, whose religious duties are few, and on the other, of the priest and his aides.

624 The traditional organization based on the hospitales survives with the same officers as of old, under the name of *cabildo*, but 794 it has lost many of its connections with the civil government and the priest. It is a group of cargueros, officers who organize certain festivals entirely through their own resources, help the priest in the maintenance of his household and the church, and name the next cargueros. The importance of this cabildo in the village is variable. In some places it is still the main religious body, as in Angahuan,[48] while in others it has receded and almost disappeared, as in Tzintzuntan, where it is called *cargueros de la kenguería*.[49] Cherán represents an intermediate stage, with the cabildo losing much of its former importance. The attitude of the local priest in relying on local customs or doing without them in the organization of his household and church is an important factor in determining the importance of the cabildo (or of similar cargueros) at any given moment.

There are other groups (*mayordomías*) sponsoring the cult of various saints; they are independent of each other and of the town government. The expenses are met individually by each mayordomo, who is replaced when an individual asks for his position (usually to fulfil a vow) either of the priest or of the outgoing mayordomo or owners of the saint. The civil authorities also intervene in the organization of the church aspects of some festivals and they name commissioners to organize them.

793 The local priest takes care of the liturgical celebrations. For their organization and church upkeep he can rely on the tra- 794 ditional cabildo or he can name commissioners when the occasion requires it. Also under his direction are a number of religious societies whose members engage primarily in acts of devotion and have few obligations as to the festivals or their expenses. The priest can also give the mayordomía of a saint belonging to the church.[50]

794 Communal property for the cult of the saints is practically non-existent. The financing and organization can be done either by the individual sponsor (carguero) who assumes all obligations personally or

48. Beals, 1946, 143.
49. Foster, 1948, 201-2.
50. Beals, 1946, 119; Foster, 1948, 202-204.

2:Carrasco E-4, 5 (1945)1952
[P. 33b] NU34 Tarasco NU34
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668 178 794 the presents given for church support during the years when priests were lacking). They wanted the cargos to be requested directly from the priest. The outcome was not clear at the time of Beals' study, although the future of the cabildo did not seem very promising, since the priest was opposed to it.[60]

[793] In Jarácuaro, where there was no resident priest at the time of our work, the leading sinarquistas were against becoming cargueros because of the expenses involved and because they did not consider this necessary to be good Catholics. Some old men said they should accept cargos before associating with the elders "because they haven't done anything for the village." The fact was, however, that their help and advice were always requested by the local authorities.

Comparing more conservative communities such as Angahuan or the pre-revolutionary Chilchota[61] with Cherán, it is seen that the cabildo gradually loses its rôle as the main organizer of the folk religion and, although surviving, becomes only one mayordomía or group of mayordomías similar to the others. Participation in the cabildo mayordomía as the prerequisite for eldership disappears, as does the elders' rôle of granting sponsorships. Its importance as organizer of the priest's household and caretaker of the church building depends on how much a given priest relies on them.[62] The trend seems to be toward a situation similar to that in Tzintzuntzan, where the old hospital organization has already disappeared.[63]

[656] In some cases the new civil authorities intervene in the organization of festivals. On the one hand, this could be taken as a reunion of Church and State in the local sphere, for the new civil authorities assume religious functions. The feeling still prevails that every man should take a cargo and do something for the town before becoming an officer, and this is being transferred to a new system of local government. To the extent that the folk culture survives, this trend might be expected to continue. The new authorities work in close connection with the priest and mayordomías for a new organization more suited to the changing environment and economic situation than is the old-fashioned cabildo.

60. Ibid., 124 ff.
61. Ibid., 143-44, 215-19.
62. Ibid., 116.
63. Foster, 1948, 201-202.

183 story, communal land is thus defended. The man who sold it against the community's interests is put out of the village and goes to live in the woods where he eats snakes and becomes insane. The rich are defended in the two stories about the dead who have to come back to earth in order to repay their masters. The landowner is clearly supported in one of them: the foreman who gave his master's corn to the peons has to come back to earth and sweat at the plow until he pays his master back. This punishment is intended not only to redeem his sin but also to enable him to tell the people "always to act as the master tells you."

Even poor peasants condemn land distribution as going against this principle, [775] and the agraristas as recipients of that land are doomed to hell; the burning place in hell is ready for them. The Devil wanders freely wherever they prevail. They are to blame for the volcano [823] (Paricutin) in a number of opinions, no matter what is the particular action that brings the whole thing about

(2) Much material deals with the 183 wrongness of anything that is against the Church and organized relation, including 794 both the folk cult and orthodox Catholicism.

Taking cargos is considered necessary to reach heaven: "Vasco de Quiroga instructed us to take cargos in order to reach salvation; it is a work in this world in order to be able to go to heaven." "Cargos are to serve God." In Jarácuaro the cargueros wear a crown during processions and it is said that those who take no cargos have no crown, thereby diminishing their standing before God. In Tzintzuntan it is said that the carguero who does not participate in the Saturday processions has to do so after death.

The financial burden of cargos, discussed before, is reflected in the folk theme of the prospective carguero who sells his soul (or his daughter's) to the Devil in order to get money with which to finance the festival at his charge. In two of three cases [776] with this theme, the saints intervene to rescue the pledged soul.

● [793] The priest is considered the representative of God and it is felt that he has to be obeyed.

688 Failure to fulfill obligations toward God brings punishment. Adam and Eve are 183 condemned to work. The man who refuses to give food to Saint Anthony disguised

7: Kaplan E-5 (1948)1951 NU34 Tarasco NU34
Sierra Tarascans

178 their more mundane activities. It was therefore with the expectation of a re-
796 warding experience that the annual Corpus Christi fiesta was awaited in the
[114] pueblo of Paracho where the author was engaged in anthropological studies during the summer of 1948.

Paracho is a mestizo community of approximately three thousand persons.
131 It is located in the Sierra Region of Michoacán, in the heart of the Tarascan area. The pueblo is approximately half-way between Carapan and Uruapan on the branch of the national highway that connects those towns and is about fifteen miles from each. Although the community is rapidly becoming urban-
178 ized it still adheres to many of the old customs—to a diminishing extent, to be sure, as new ways come to supplant them. The performance of the Huanancha dance at the festival of Corpus Christi is one such "survival," but apparently it is coming to have a function somewhat altered from that which it had in early Colonial days.

The church calendar notwithstanding, the fiesta of Corpus Christi is cele-
796 brated at different times in the several pueblos of the Sierra Region of Michoa-
443 cán. This is primarily because a large and continuous market is a cardinal requirement for a successful holiday, and the travelling salesmen, operators of merry-go-rounds, gamblers, clowns, and other personages who help to make the market place a center of attraction for a wide area, cannot be in several places at the same time. In Paracho, Corpus Christi is celebrated on the second Sunday in August and continues for two days. For the community the holiday has three main functions: commercial, religious and recreational. In 1948, the year in which the fiesta in Paracho was observed by the author, the religious aspect appears to have been subordinate. One villager said that no special church ceremonies were held in Paracho that year because the Bishop of
[793] Zamorra and the priest had decided that "it was not good for the people because they don't know how to have a nice holiday and they get drunk." The clerics were also reported to have said, "if the people can have a nice holiday then they can have the church ceremonies (on that day) again." There had been special observances on Corpus Christi in 1947, the first year that the present parish priest was in residence.

178 But it was not only the religious significance of the holiday that was changing
533 in the minds and activities of the people. Other practices associated with the holiday in the past are also receiving less attention than formerly. For example,
796 each trade group—an organization of members who work at the same special-
[467] ized trade, of which twenty-one are recognized in Paracho—used to hire a "music" (that is, either a band or an orchestra) which followed the group about the town for the two and a half days of the holiday, playing almost all of the time. Each group would vie with the others to get the best "music" and to have their musicians play the longest and the loudest. In 1948 only five of the trade groups hired either bands or orchestras, and a sixth band was provided
178 by the mayor of the town. We were also told that formerly it was the practice
467 of each trade group to set itself up in the plaza on the second day of the holiday
796 and demonstrate for all to see how they worked—making miniature chocolate

11: Boyá H-4, 5 (1953) 1958
NU34 Tarasco NU34

[P. 1]

INTRODUCTION

Prehistoric Tarascans, residing for centuries in the lake country of Michoacán, Mexico, asked questions about things around them. They asked why the land was sometimes flat, sometimes hilly, sometimes rich, and sometimes poor. They wanted to know why the precious waters of a spring suddenly erupted from beneath a tree on the hillside. They felt that the wonderful light-giving sun, the hurrying stream, the glittering stars, and the rustling leaves all required explanation.

Before the Spanish Conquest, the oral accounts of the *Petamuti* (high priest) explained the phenomena of nature through the great deeds of Tarascan gods and culture heroes. Knowledge of historical events was similarily preserved.

Some of these stories, to which Catholic and modern elements have been added, are still "history" to the native Tarascans living in isolated pueblos in the mountains. As with many people, it is what the Tarascans believe to be the historical truth, rather than the actual history itself, which most profoundly influences their thoughts and actions.

BACKGROUND OF THE LEGENDS

The Tarascan area has contracted since the time of the Spanish Conquest. Located approximately 250 miles northwest of Mexico City in the State of Michoacán, it centers in several geographic areas which form a fairly continuous block.

In the area around Zacapu (Fig. 1), traditional point of origin of the Tarascan dynasty, remain a few purely Tarascan villages. Bordering the Mexico City-Guadalajara highway a few miles northwest of Zacapu is a small, pleasant valley approximately a mile wide and six miles long. It is called La Cañada and in it nestle ten of the Once Pueblos of pre-Conquest days.

11: Boyd H-4, 5 (1953) 1958
NU34 Tarasco NU34

[P.6]

THE LEGENDS

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[128] The eight Tarascan legends have been arranged in their presumed historical sequence. The creation myth is followed by a
[173] legendary account of tribal wanderings until the beautiful and
[167] abundant land, Michoacán, was reached.

Next are four love stories explaining natural features of the
[175] countryside. The first of these belongs to the period of intertribal wars (1200-1400 A.D.) which eventually consolidated the empire. The second is a simple folk tale explaining the origin of an important spring. Rivalry between political and religious power may be perceived in the third. The fourth reflects palace intrigue and the problems of succession to the throne.

[648] The final two legends deal with the coming of the Spaniards. The first one prophesies their coming and the second presents a rationalization of the Conquest.

[128] The legends are preceded by short notes which place them in historical perspective.

THE BIRTH OF CUERÓHPERI

Historical Comment

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[175] The Tarascans, like other cultured peoples of Mexico and Central America, had knowledge of the calendar. In the *Relación de Michoacán*, a work written probably in 1540-41 by an anonymous Franciscan priest, the names of fourteen of the eighteen Tarascan months of twenty days each are mentioned, and for four of the months the corresponding date in the Christian calendar is given (Caso, 1943).

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292 At the fiesta of *Uazcata cónscuaro* (on June 27,) the chief priest, dressed in full pompous regalia, related the history of the nation and its princes.

11: Boyd H-4, 5 (1953) 1958
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[P. 32]

DISCUSSION

539 Tarascan legends may be examined from many viewpoints, including those of history, ethnology, psychology, and literature. Probably the most important consideration is the basic function they fulfill for the Tarascans—a function so significant that the legends have survived to the present. Only a brief analysis of these factors can be made in this study.

539 173 174 [167] As orally transmitted history they leave much to be desired, but they contain usable references which support other data. While one may doubt that the Tarascans originated in South America, as suggested in "Just as the Birds," migration myths are fairly common in the folklore of Indians of the Americas. To some extent they probably indicate dim memories of tribal migrations.

539 796 782 [727] The reference in the legend of Lake Cuitzeo to the placing of the warrior's heart in the temple as an offering to the sun god, Huriata, is a reasonably accurate account of ceremonial usages. In early times the Tarascans made offerings of deer meat to their gods; later, human sacrifice was instituted. War prisoners were preferred, and one reason for war was to have sufficient victims. In any event, the presentation of the victim's heart was the choicest possible offering to Huriata.

539 [108] [193] Items of psychological interest include the need to explain natural features of the countryside, as shown in the story of Quiritzícuaro. The change of Candó from a good to a bad priest in the legend of Huanita may refer to defrocked clergymen of post-Conquest times, but most likely it refers to a period of temporary degeneration among the hereditary priestly class during the days of Chief Tariyaran some two hundred years before Conquest times.

539 175 648 In this same vein, the legend of Inchátiro shows the depressed psychic condition of these indigenous people as the result of the Conquest. The dream portion in the same legend reveals the nature

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